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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000141

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: NINEWA: NINEWA IIP LEADER TELLS PMIN THEY ARE  
THREATENED BY BOTH AL-QAIDA AND THE KURDISH PARTIES

Classified By: A/DCM Robert S. Ford. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

11. (C) Summary: The leader of the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) in Ninewa Province, Mohammad Shaker, told us January 8 that both the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Al-Qaida Iraq (AQI) routinely intimidate and attack members of his party. The former has largely prevented IIP from campaigning in some areas in the province, while the latter has assassinated IIP members. To combat the violence and intimidation, Shaker said he will place observers at each of the province's voting centers. Shaker also said that the new Provincial Council (PC) would need to focus on economics to put an end to the insurgency. Shaker said he would not rule out entering a coalition with the KDP. IIP could be a sought after coalition partner after the election, and it is conceivable Shaker could be the next governor with support either from the Kurdish parties or Hadba. End Summary.

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KDP AND AQI INTIMIDATION  
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12. (C) On January 8, PMIN met with Muhammad Shaker, head of the IIP in Ninewa. Shaker said that his party is under threat from both AQI and the KDP. According to Shaker, the KDP and the security forces under their command (Peshmerga and the Kurdish secret police, or Assayish) prevent the IIP from campaigning in Sinjar and Zummar in the west of Ninewa, Al-Qosh and Sheikhan in the north and Makhmoor and Al-Gwair in the south. Shaker also said that AQI is behind the violence directed at the IIP in Mosul, which most recently included the murder of one of their prominent supporters, who was a pharmacist. According to Shaker, AQI controls the Mosul neighborhoods of Zanjili, Bab al-Jadeed, Wahda and Tahreer. Shaker said that the IIP is unable to protect itself against the constant AQI threat in Mosul, in part because his party does not have any connections with the governor or the IA and therefore cannot obtain carry permits for firearms.

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IIP TO DEPLOY THOUSANDS OF OBSERVERS  
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13. (C) Shaker said, due to the intimidation and violence that the IIP has suffered, he is concerned for his supporters on Election Day. Shaker said that international observers were essential to ensure transparency and protect his party members from abuse once voting begins. Highlighting his concern, Shaker said that he would deploy over 4,000 observers on Election Day - one for each voting station. IIP PC member Yahya Mahjoub, who was also present at the meeting, complained IIP political party observers are only allowed to vote at the centers closest to their residences. It is therefore difficult for IIP to send its observers to voting

stations across the province, Mahjoub said. Mahjoub suggested that political observers should be treated like elections workers, who can vote at the center where they work. (Comment: Of course, treating political party observers (PPOs) like election workers could also open up a possible avenue for voter fraud, as PPOs could conceivably rotate among election stations and cast a vote at each station. If there are 4000 PPOs per party, this could produce a statistically significant anomaly. End Comment.)

¶4. (C) PMIN said he was encouraged to hear that the IIP will use so many observers. PMIN said that local observers would be the most important part of discouraging Election Day Qbe the most important part of discouraging Election Day malfeasance because they will number in the thousands whereas there will only be dozens of international observers. PMIN suggested that the IIP should coordinate observation efforts with other political parties for maximum effect.

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THE NEW PROVINCIAL COUNCIL  
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¶5. (C) Shaker declined to specifically identify potential political allies in the new PC, saying only that the IIP would determine coalition partners based on election results. Shaker said that his party wants to focus on economic development, reconstruction, the delivery of essential services, and unemployment. Shaker said that terrorism in the province stems directly from its economic problems. If the new PC could focus on fixing Ninewa's economic problems, the insurgency would end in six months, Shaker said.

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¶6. (C) Comment: Without credible opinion polling, it is difficult to assess IIP's chances in Ninewa. They seem better organized than the smaller Sunni Arab parties, but still must compete for Sunni Arab votes with Athiel al-Nujaifi's Hadba party, which is expected to attract a significant level of support through its tribal connections and strong anti-Kurd campaign rhetoric. If IIP ends up as one of the province's top three parties, along with Hadba and the Kurdish "Brotherhood list," it could play kingmaker, and Shaker could end up as governor in a ruling coalition that includes IIP and either the Kurds or Hadba. Shaker is keeping his options open. End comment.

CROCKER